DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 738 PS 027 941

TITLE	Aiming for Accountability: Lessons Learned from Eight States. Reaching Results.
INSTITUTION	Harvard Family Research Project, Cambridge, MA.
SPONS AGENCY	Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia, PA.
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	56p.; Compiled by the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) Results-Based Accountability Project. For related documents, see PS 027 933-941.
AVAILABLE FROM	Harvard Family Research Project, 38 Concord Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138 ($5; this report plus 8 additional reports in this series, $40). Tel: 617-495-9108; Fax: 617-495-8594; e-mail: hfrp_gse@harvard.edu; Web site: <http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp>.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accountability; Case Studies; Program Descriptions; Program Design; Program Development; Program Evaluation; Program Implementation; State Action; *State Programs; *Welfare Services
IDENTIFIERS	Family Resource and Support Programs

ABSTRACT

Interest is growing in planning and implementing new systems of holding child and family services accountable for results. The Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Project at the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) has supported and built upon recent state efforts to develop these new accountability systems for child and family services. This report from HFRP begins with an analysis of the characteristics of promising RBA efforts across eight states (Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont). The report compares the expectations of RBA efforts against the experiences of those responsible for RBA in these eight states. Finally, the report concludes with an assessment of the potential of RBA for child and family services, highlighting some of the challenges and creative solutions developed by the states involved in the eight case studies. The report asserts that RBA has the potential to improve child and family outcomes if it is used as a tool to help managers, policymakers, and citizens see what is working, change service strategies accordingly, and promote learning. The research found 11 characteristics common to successful RBA efforts: (1) began with strategic planning; (2) learned from past efforts; (3) considered appropriate mechanisms to institutionalize RBA work; (4) clearly identified roles and responsibilities; (5) took into account political contexts; (6) developed over time; (7) engaged champions; (8) built relationships; (9) incorporated training and technical assistance; (10) designated funds, staff, and computer support; and (11) developed reporting for a variety of audiences. The report maintains that, although current expectations about the benefits of an RBA approach are not aligned with these states' experiences, its research suggests that if RBA is used as a tool for improvement rather than punishment, it can lead people to engage in common problem solving, help those responsible for public programs to plan and manage, demonstrate the results of public investments, and promote innovation. Appendices summarize RBA efforts in the eight states, describe the study's methodology, and provide RBA resources. (EV)

ED 434 738

Aiming for Accountability: Lessons Learned from Eight States. Reaching Results

Compiled by the HFRP Results-Based Accountability Project

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Ann B. Hannum

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

PS 027 941

Harvard Family Research Project

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

AIMING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY:

LESSONS LEARNED FROM EIGHT STATES

Harvard Family Research Project
Cambridge, MA
1998

This project was supported by a generous grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the Harvard Family Research Project.

HARVARD FAMILY RESEARCH PROJECT

Founded in 1983 by Dr. Heather Weiss, the Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) is today at the center of a national movement to promote information regarding how states and communities are developing processes to improve and redesign child and family services and policies. HFRP's pathbreaking research provides practitioners, researchers, and policymakers with timely, insightful information about effective child and family services and policies.

Disseminating its research widely, HFRP links people, programs, ideas, and resources together to create innovative services and family-sustaining policies. HFRP's research helps states and communities create systems to monitor and assess programs and services. Using HFRP research and analysis, schools, agencies, and communities are learning about the best strategies for successful programming to improve child and family outcomes.

Harvard Family Research Project

38 Concord Avenue

Cambridge, MA 02138

Tel.: (617) 495-9108

Fax: (617) 495-8594

e-mail: hfrp_gse@.harvard.edu

Web site: http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp

© 1998 by the President and Fellows of Harvard College (Harvard Family Research Project). All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any way without the written permission of the Harvard Family Research Project. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the Harvard Family Research Project and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of its funders. Published in 1998. Printed in the United States of America.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This work was supported by a grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The research was conducted by researchers on HFRP's Results-Based Accountability (RBA) Project: Diane Schilder, Karen Horsch, Priscilla Little, Anne Brady, and Elizabeth Riel. We would like to thank the many research assistants who helped to make this publication possible: Beth Cureton, Julie Grossman, Kari Sorensen, and Carol Trauner. We would like to thank Ann Hannum, Editor, and Jessica Chapel, Editorial Assistant. The researchers would also like to thank Heather Weiss, HFRP Director, and Elena Lopez and Julia Coffman, HFRP consultants, for their comments and input on drafts on this report.

The information in this report comes, in part, from individual interviews with key contacts in the eight states in this study. We want to thank the many individuals who volunteered their time and expertise to contribute to this publication. This report would not have been possible without the assistance of those who shared their valuable insights about challenges and promising approaches to designing and implementing RBA efforts.

AIMING FOR ACCOUNTABILITY:
LESSONS LEARNED FROM EIGHT STATES

PREFACE 1

INTRODUCTION 3

What Is Results-Based Accountability? 3

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROMISING RBA EFFORTS? 5

Begin with Strategic Planning 5
Learn from Past Reform Efforts 6
Consider Appropriate Mechanisms to Institutionalize RBA Work 8
Clearly Identify Roles and Responsibilities 10
Take into Account State Contexts 11
Develop over Time 11
Engage Champions 12
Incorporate Training and Technical Assistance 15
Designate Funds, Staff, and Computer Support 17
Develop Reporting for a Variety of Audiences 18
Build Relationships 19

CAN RBA HELP "MANAGE FOR RESULTS?" 21

Expectations vs. Current Practice: Is There a Match? 21
The Challenges of RBA Design and Implementation: Reconciling Expectations with Experience to Produce Results 22
Engaging People in Defining Solutions to Problems 22
Helping Public Managers and Service Providers with Decision Making 24
Demonstrating Results of Investments in Child and Family Services 26
Promoting Innovation 26

CONCLUSION 29

APPENDIX A 31

Results-Based Accountability: An Overview of RBA Efforts in Eight States 31
FLORIDA 33
GEORGIA 35
IOWA 37
MINNESOTA 39
NORTH CAROLINA 41
OHIO 43
OREGON 45
VERMONT 47

APPENDIX B 51

Methodology 51

APPENDIX C 53

RBA Resources 53

PREFACE

It has been over five years since Osborne and Gaebler began the "accountability revolution" with their book, *Reinventing Government.*[1] Since that time, the notion of results-based accountability (RBA) has reached far beyond the public sector to include foundations, non-profits, and a variety of community-based organizations. We have learned a great deal about accountability over the years. For example, we know that the development of RBA systems is neither one-shot nor simple. Rather, developing these systems is an iterative process which involves experimentation and continuous assessment and revision. Further, we now know that there is no one RBA model that can be exported and adopted in all situations. RBA systems are highly context-specific, developing in response to the unique political, social, and institutional environments in which they work. We also know that while RBA systems can help make decisions more information-based, decision making in the public arena always will be, in part, a political process. Finally, the development of RBA systems is, at its core, a very human process — dependent on champions, relationships, personal credibility, and the ability to engage a variety of stakeholders in frank discussions about what needs to be changed to improve the results of public programs.

While we now know many of the features and considerations that help in the design of potentially successful accountability systems, we are at an important crossroads in the accountability movement. We must begin thinking about how the systems can best be used to help people "manage for results."

This report examines how we can develop and implement RBA systems that can truly help us to bring about better public results, especially in the area of child and family services. It draws on the experiences of eight states that have been implementing RBA systems in child and family services, and argues that RBA systems must be viewed as *tools* that can help organizations to learn and improve.[2] Our research suggests that when viewed in this way, RBA distinguishes itself from previous reform efforts in that it can: lead people to engage in common problem solving; help those responsible for public programs to plan and manage; demonstrate the results of public investments; and promote innovation.

Realizing the full potential of RBA is not easy. This report describes some of the important characteristics of RBA efforts across the eight case study states. It then presents some of the important challenges we face as well as some of the solutions that states and communities have identified as they design RBA systems for child and family services.

This report is intended to inform both those responsible for designing and implementing RBA efforts as well as those who oversee or mandate these efforts. We hope that those responsible for the design and implementation of RBA efforts will find the insights and experiences of others

---

[1] Osborne, D., & Gaebler, T. (1992). *Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

[2] The experiences of the eight states (Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont) are discussed separately in the case study reports series, *Aiming for Accountability.* See Harvard Family Research Project, (1998). *Aiming for Accountability.* Cambridge, MA: Author.

helpful as they work through the particular challenges of their work. For those readers who are responsible for mandating or overseeing RBA efforts, we hope this report will encourage not only a realistic assessment of what RBA can do, but also an understanding of the various and complicated issues that arise in translating a vision of accountability into a system that works.

In closing, I would like to thank the many people with whom we worked to gather the information in this report — this report would not exist without the thoughtful insights and reflections of those who struggle with RBA issues on a daily basis. I would also like to thank The Pew Charitable Trusts which supported this research effort. I look forward to a continued discussion about how we can best use RBA to achieve the results for children and families that we all seek.

Heather Weiss
Director, HFRP

INTRODUCTION

To reclaim citizen trust and respect and to improve decision making of public managers and policymakers, governments are increasingly turning to a new form of accountability that provides information about the results of public investments. With the implementation of the Government Performance and Results Act in 1993, this new form of accountability, called results-based accountability (RBA), is taking hold at the federal level. Devolution of child and family services to states and localities has also created opportunities for other levels of government to design and implement RBA systems.

During the past two years, HFRP has been studying child and family RBA efforts to both assess the characteristics of promising efforts and determine the potential and limitations of RBA. In this report, we highlight important considerations in the design and implementation of RBA efforts, drawing on the experiences of eight states (Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, Ohio, Oregon, North Carolina, Vermont).[3] These states are at various stages in the design and implementation of RBA efforts for child and family services, and were chosen to illustrate the challenges and opportunities of RBA at various phases of development.[4]

This report begins with an analysis of the characteristics of promising RBA efforts across states. It then compares the expectations of RBA efforts against the experiences of those responsible for RBA in the eight states in our study. Finally, the report concludes with an assessment of the potential of RBA for child and family services, highlighting some of the challenges and creative solutions that the eight case study states developed.

What Is Results-Based Accountability?

While many use the term RBA, definitions of the term vary. The experiences of the eight states in our study suggest that at a minimum, RBA involves:

- The articulation of goals and objectives
- Regular collection of data on progress toward goals and objectives
- Regular public reporting of data
- Regular use of data for decision making.

RBA data that are collected, reported, and used for decision making are generally not results in a research or evaluation sense. That is, RBA data do not generally report why changes occurred. Nonetheless, RBA data provide a snapshot of conditions at a given point in time that can be useful for monitoring progress toward goals. Table 1 provides examples of RBA goals and data.

---

[3] For a brief description of each state's efforts, as well as the unique features of each state's RBA efforts, see Appendix A.

[4] The experiences of each of these states is discussed in separate case study reports in a series titled *Aiming for Accountability*. For a discussion of the methodology used in these studies, see Appendix B.

Table 1. Example of RBA Data

Desired Result (Also called Goal or Outcome by some states and communities)	Method of measuring progress toward desired result	Data 1996	 1997
To reduce teen pregnancy rates by 4 percentage points by December 1997	Vital Statistics (public health record)	PREGNANCY RATE 24%	 19%
To increase client satisfaction with services provided by the public health agency by 4 percentage points by December 1997	Standardized client satisfaction questionnaire administered to a random sample of clients with follow up interviews to non-respondents	RATE OF CLIENT SATISFACTION 75%	 79%
To increase the percentage of teens graduating from a teen pregnancy prevention program who report regular use of contraception or abstinence 6 months after completing the program by 10 percentage points by 1997	Standardized survey sent to a random sample of teens who graduated from the program	PERCENT OF TEENS USING CONTRACEPTION OR ABSTAINING 72%	 76%* *Desired result of 10 percentage point increase by 1997 not achieved

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF PROMISING RBA EFFORTS?

While no single model for a results-based accountability (RBA) system exists, there are common characteristics across several states that are important for promising RBA efforts. Eleven common characteristics are discussed below. Where applicable, tables are provided to highlight efforts across states. Throughout this section, examples from our case studies are provided.

Begin with Strategic Planning

Promising RBA efforts are not simply technical efforts — they are expressions of the values and priorities of the policymakers, providers of services, and citizens of the states. Recognizing the importance of values, many of the efforts in this study began by engaging in a strategic planning process in which a vision was articulated.

Strategic planning can be used on an ongoing basis, or can be done periodically to reassess progress toward desired goals. For example, states such as Georgia have created bodies that are responsible for monitoring progress toward the vision in the strategic plan and modifying it accordingly on a regular basis. Other states, such as Oregon and Minnesota have recently revisited their strategic plans in light of changes in the states. In many cases, strategic planning leads states to consider some of the characteristics that are described in this report. The strategic planning process involves reviewing values and priorities, assessing past performance, and determining future directions.

States have used a variety of mechanisms to engage in strategic planning. These include:

- *Committees or Task Forces.* Some states have established committees or task forces that meet to define goals and examine progress toward goals. For example, in Vermont, a committee called the State Team for Children and Families meets regularly to articulate goals and monitor progress toward achieving them.[5] These groups represent all key stakeholders at the state level who are responsible for child and family services. Another example can be found in Florida, where the Commission on Government Accountability to the People set up meetings with commissioners, with assistance from agency staff, legislators and their staff, civic organizations, and a broad spectrum of non-profit associations, to identify outcomes.[6]

- *Work Groups.* To ensure that the process of articulating a vision and developing goals and outcomes is efficient, some states have established working groups that undertake a systematic process and make recommendations to oversight bodies. For example, in Georgia and Ohio, larger oversight committees meet on a regular basis but the subcommittees constitute working groups which work through the details and make

[5] See "The State Team Brings Together a Variety of Stakeholders," "Broad Stakeholder Input Informs the Selection of Goals," and "State Team Identifies Three Tiers of Indicators" in *Aiming for Accountability: Vermont.*
[6] See "The Florida Benchmarks Took Two Years to Develop" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida.*

recommendations to the larger group.[7] These working groups have technical expertise and represent the issue areas of the larger oversight bodies.

- *Surveys.* States have used public surveys to obtain the insights of citizens and have used citizen input to frame future directions. For example, in Iowa, a group of researchers from universities, colleges, and the private sector designed and implemented a large-scale telephone survey that obtained citizens' views on their priorities for the state.[8]

- *Community Forums.* Some states have used public forums to help garner citizens' input about the important goals and values of the state. For example, in Minnesota, Minnesota Planning staff divided the state into regions and held meetings with citizens in each region.[9] At these meetings, citizens articulated their priorities. The citizen input was used in the formulation of the Minnesota Milestones strategic planning document.

Learn from Past Reform Efforts

RBA is a reform effort that, in many states, follows other budgetary, management, and systems change efforts. Many of the states in our study learned from previous efforts and used these lessons to inform the design and implementation of their RBA efforts. Table 2 describes selected reform efforts that predate the current RBA efforts and highlights selected lessons learned. (See Appendix A for summary of current efforts in each state.) Specifically, the states learned by:

- *Modifying previous approaches that failed.* Many of the eight states in the study have examined previous reform efforts to learn about what has not succeeded so that the RBA effort could be modified accordingly. For example, Florida learned that previous efforts required more human resources than had been allocated, and designated resources for its new RBA efforts accordingly.

- *Building on previous successes.* Case study states have also identified reform efforts that succeeded, and have built on these successes. For example, Georgia and Ohio have used previous reform efforts that succeeded to leverage support for new RBA efforts.

---

[7] See "Interim Policy Council Designed to Carry out Recommendations of Strategic Plan" and "Results Accountability Task Force Developed Process for Identifying Goals and Benchmarks" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia* and "Cabinet Council Relies on Workgroups to Provide Advice, Input, Guidance, and Staff" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*

[8] See "Research Reveals Iowans' Priorities: The Establishment of Benchmarks" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa.*

[9] See "Citizen Input Guided the Milestone Development" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

Table 2. Selected Reform Efforts That Predate RBA

State	Description of selected reform efforts that predate current RBA efforts
Florida	A previous reform effort in Florida, the State Planning and Programming Act, introduced the concepts of long-range state planning and short-range action programs and began a planning-programming-budgeting system. While the intent was to link planning with budgeting, these efforts were hampered by inadequate staff and computer capacity. The new efforts underway have accounted for these problems in a variety of ways, such as addressing the problem of inadequate resources by designating state staff to provide technical assistance.
Georgia	The Georgia Policy Council — the group charged with improving outcomes for children and families — has learned from previous reform efforts. In developing a comprehensive state plan to coordinate services, the Georgia Policy Council built on the work of the Family Connection Community of the early 1990s. The early work of the Family Connection provided lessons about how to collaborate effectively and provided a framework for understanding the level of effort required to improve the quality of life for children and families.
Iowa	The organizational structure and composition of the Council on Human Investment — a group charged with implementing RBA in Iowa — was informed by an earlier reform body, the Welfare Reform Council. This council, which existed in the late 1980s, consisted of an interdisciplinary collaborative body. The organizational structure was successful, and the Council on Human Investment built on its success. This group includes similar representation from throughout the state, ranging from business and labor representatives to current and former welfare recipients.
Minnesota	Performance reporting in Minnesota has built on previous performance reporting legislation that began in the 1960s. The current legislation was enacted partly because of dissatisfaction with the performance measure legislation of the past, which failed to provide information that was useful to the legislature. The new legislation specifies the content of agency reports, with the intent of increasing the likelihood that the new reports will be used by the legislature to determine if programs have been successful.
Ohio	The Ohio Family Children First (OFCF) initiative — a statewide RBA effort — learned from the Cluster, an earlier systems reform effort that began in the 1980s. The Cluster was created as a tool to encourage local service providers to work together on services for multi-problem children. Counties used the Cluster concept to develop mechanisms to coordinate services for these children. The OFCF created county-level councils which built on the mechanisms established under the Cluster.
Oregon	The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF), was created in 1993 as an outgrowth of the Oregon Community Children and Youth Services Commission. Learning from the previous reform effort that focusing only on deficits and liabilities was not effective, OCCF has instead focused on promoting the wellness of Oregon's children and families.

Vermont	Vermont's RBA efforts have built on earlier successful collaboration efforts between the two primary agencies serving children and families, the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education. Collaboration between these two agencies has been successful since the 1980s, and the spirit of collaboration has facilitated work around the identification of important results, as well as the collection and sharing of results data.

Consider Appropriate Mechanisms to Institutionalize RBA Work

One of the lessons that many states have drawn from their review of past public reform efforts is that institutionalization of reforms has been difficult. The decision about how to begin an RBA effort is an important one, since the decision can affect the sustainability of the effort. As Table 3 illustrates, states have used a variety of mechanisms to establish RBA efforts:

- *Legislation.* Many states have passed legislation that mandates different aspects of the accountability system. Most often, some legislation has focused on the establishment of budgetary accountability (See Florida, Georgia, North Carolina).[10] Other legislation (Florida, Georgia, Iowa),[11] has mandated the establishment of new coordinating committees to oversee RBA efforts, or has given authority to existing organizational entities. Legislation, by many accounts, builds a legal foundation for the effort and makes it more difficult to derail efforts purely for political reasons.

- *Executive Order.* RBA efforts have also been undertaken by Executive Order, such as in Ohio and Oregon.[12] In some cases, Executive Orders begin the effort and are then superceded by legislation. In Ohio, for example, the Family Children First Initiative began with an Executive Order and is now in statute. While Executive Orders have been used successfully to initiate RBA efforts, an effort authorized only by Executive Order is vulnerable to political turnover.

- *Informal Agreements.* A variety of RBA efforts take place because individuals and/or agencies endeavor to work together to improve results for children and families. Later, informal relationships may be codified through formal agreements or through collaborative

[10] See "Performance-based Program Budgeting: A Shift toward Increased Agency Flexibility and Accountability" and "Lesson Learned: Legislative Support Key in Moving and Implementing PB^2" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida*; "Performance Measures Mandated by the Budget Accountability and Planning Act of 1993" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia*; and "History of P/PB" and "P/PB is Linked to Department Strategic Planning" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

[11] See "GAP Benchmarks Provide Citizens' Perspective" and "The Office of Standards and Evaluation Has Responsibility for DCF's Accountability Efforts" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida*; "General Assembly Makes Commitment to the Policy Council" and "Community Partnerships Have Authority and Responsibility for Reaching Results" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia*; and "Breakthrough Legislation Launches Iowa on Its Path Toward Establishing Benchmarks, Iowa's 'Standards of Excellence,'" "Innovation Zones: A Community-Based Approach to Improving Outcomes for Children and Families," and "The Iowa Citizen Foster Care Review Board: BFR in Action" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa.*

[12] See "Governor's Commitment to Children and Families Led to OFCF Initiative" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio* and "Oregon Benchmarks Express State Vision" in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon.*

planning and programming. In Vermont, for example, the collaborative work of the two agencies responsible for serving children and families, the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education, can be attributed to the strong personal and professional relationship between the secretaries of both agencies, complemented by informal agreements between the agencies. Informal agreements are often necessary to begin RBA efforts, but as with an Executive Order, if no other legal mechanism authorizes the RBA effort, it is vulnerable if there is a change of administration.

Table 3. Mechanisms for Institutionalization

State	Description of mechanisms used to institutionalize selected RBA
Florida	Two of the state's RBA efforts, statewide benchmarks and performance-based program budgeting, result from the 1994 legislation. This legislation was strongly supported by both the governor and the legislature.
Georgia	The Georgia Policy Council for Children and Families, initially a temporary structure, was authorized in legislation in 1994. The Policy Council is responsible for RBA for children and families in the state. In 1993, the Georgia legislature passed another law that instituted a statewide requirement that all current expenditures reflect performance measures and results-based budgeting.
Iowa	Iowa's efforts to develop a human investment strategy began in 1991, but have their roots in Governor Branstad's 1988 Executive Order creating the Welfare Reform Council and Work Group. The Council and Work Group made up an interdisciplinary collaborative that developed a series of first-in-the-nation initiatives to move welfare recipients toward self-sufficiency. In 1993, Senate File 286 was passed — formally authorizing the Council.
Minnesota	The Minnesota Milestones were initiated under Governor Arne Carleson, who gave the Minnesota Planning Office the responsibility for the design and implementation. Performance reporting in Minnesota was initiated by the legislature in response to the Minnesota Milestones in 1993. The Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives were created in statute in 1993 to help communities integrate services and improve outcomes for children and families.
North Carolina	The state's performance/program budget approach was established by legislation and requires the governor to report annually to the legislature on what programs are and are not doing. The state's well-known initiative for children and families, *Smart Start*, was established in legislation in 1993.
Ohio	An Executive Order initially created the state-level Cabinet Council for the Ohio Family and Children First Initiative. It is chaired by the governor and consists of the directors of seven departments related to children and families.

Oregon	The Oregon Progress Board, which oversees the Oregon Benchmarks, was created in legislation in 1989. In 1993, legislation was passed establishing the Oregon Commission on Children and Families. That same year, legislation was also passed establishing the Department of Administrative Services as the lead agency to implement statewide use of performance measures. In 1994, a Memorandum of Understanding between Oregon and the federal government created the Oregon Option.
Vermont	No formal legislation or Executive Order mandates the development of a results-based system in Vermont. However, the commitment of the secretaries of the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education and the close relationship between them have been a driving force in the state's extensive RBA work.

Clearly Identify Roles and Responsibilities

In addition to considering the mechanisms to institutionalize an RBA effort, it is important to clarify roles and responsibilities of those involved in the design and implementation of the RBA effort. Roles can be clarified in legislation, through regulation, or through informal means. States have established a range of organizational structures that clearly establish responsibility for design and implementation of RBA:

- *New entities with RBA responsibility.* New entities can be established at the state-level, agency-level, or within specific offices charged with design and implementation of the RBA effort. These new entities can either have primary responsibility for the RBA effort, or provide advice and guidance to those who are designing and implementing the RBA effort. For example, Florida's Department of Children and Families has established the Office of Standards and Evaluation, which provides guidance to the department's accountability efforts.[13] In Iowa, the Council on Human Investment is a newly created structure that is charged with overseeing the state's RBA effort.[14]

- *Existing Policy, Planning, or Budget Offices.* In many states, offices of planning and budgeting have had responsibility for overseeing statewide accountability efforts, particularly as they relate to budgeting. For example, in North Carolina, the existing planning and budgeting offices are responsible for implementing the program performance budgeting in the state.[15] These offices produce handbooks and guides to assist those working to develop accountability systems. These offices also provide training and technical assistance to staff.

[13] See "The Accountability Efforts of the Florida Department of Children and Families" and "History of DCF" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida.*
[14] See "History of the Council on Human Investment" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa.*
[15] See "OSPL and OSBM Provide Technical Assistance and Guidance to Agencies" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

Take into Account State Contexts

Key elements of promising RBA efforts include understanding the social and political context of the state and taking into account the balance of power between the executive and legislative branches.[16]

Aspects of state context that are important to consider include:

- *The relative power of the executive and legislative branches of government in the state.* The relative strength of the governor compared to the legislative provides information about which key stakeholders need to be involved in the design and implementation of the RBA efforts. For example, in a state with a weak governor, gubernatorial support alone for RBA would not be adequate. In contrast, in a state with a strong governor — such as Iowa, in which Governor Terry E. Branstad (R) has been in office since 1982 — commitment from the governor alone might encourage staff to buy-in to RBA efforts.[17]

- *The nature of state-local relationships.* The power of the localities relative to the state can influence the success of an RBA effort. States in this study with strong local control have accounted for this by sharing responsibility for results with local governments. For example, North Carolina and Ohio — states with strong local control — have encouraged localities to articulate results for which they will be accountable.[18]

- *The size and culture of the state.* The size and culture of the state can influence the degree to which citizens become engaged in an RBA process. For example, smaller states, such as Vermont, have been able to obtain citizen input directly, whereas larger states, such as Florida, have obtained such input through associations that represent citizens.

- *The social, economic, and demographic profile of the state.*[19] The social, economic, and demographic profile of the state can influence RBA efforts in a variety of ways. Each state in this study has tailored the RBA effort to the unique social and demographic realities of the state. For example, Georgia was prompted by its number 47 ranking in KIDS COUNT, to tailor its RBA efforts to monitor progress toward improving the well-being of children and families.

Develop Over Time

Developing and implementing RBA systems takes time. In many cases, a results-focus is a substantial change in the culture of public institutions, and time is required to help people learn

---

[16] See Table 7 in Appendix A for political context.
[17] See "State Context" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa.*
[18] See "Process of Identifying Goals and Indicators" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina* and "Cabinet Council Relies on Workgroups to Provide Advice, Guidance, and Staff," "County Councils Employ a Participatory Process to Identify Goals and Measures," and "Action Team Facilitates County Councils 'Thinking Outside the Box'" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*
[19] See Table 8 in Appendix A for sociodemographic characteristics of each state.

what works and what does not. Many of the RBA efforts in the eight case study states began with ambitious timelines, only to find that the timelines needed to be modified. As a result, states have developed different ways to help them both implement change and "step back" to assess and make changes thoughtfully. These methods include:

- *Pilots.* Some states began RBA efforts with pilots to learn from experience and to use the results of the pilots to secure "buy-in" from various stakeholders. Florida and North Carolina have each begun implementation of a performance-based budget with several pilots.[20] Piloting these efforts enabled the identification of problems. By demonstrating early positive outcomes, pilots can help create demand for results data.

- *Staged/Phased In Implementation.* To build capacity and learn from early experience, some states have phased in implementation of the RBA effort. For example, in Ohio, the effort to focus on results has been spearheaded by the Ohio Family and Children First Initiative and is being phased in to various family and children programs in the state, such as the newly created Family Stability Incentive Fund.[21] In Georgia, the focus on results began with the creation of a 10-year strategic plan, and is now being phased in to the Community Partnerships throughout the state.[22]

- *Iterative Approaches.* The RBA efforts that have been in existence for the longest time have undergone changes to reflect changes in priorities, as well as to incorporate lessons learned. In Oregon, the Oregon Benchmarks have been revisited both to reflect Oregonians' current priorities and shorten the list to a more manageable number of benchmarks.[23] In Minnesota, the Milestones are also being revisited to reflect changes that have occurred in the state since their inception.[24]

Engage Champions

Champions are critical in ensuring that an RBA effort is successfully designed and implemented. Individuals at a variety of levels need to buy-in in order to shift to a results perspective. Without politicians, leaders, and grassroots supporters championing the effort, RBA systems will languish. To ensure such support, it is critical to have training and technical assistance built into the effort. States have a variety of champions who have voiced their support in differing ways. Table 4 highlights key champions in each of the eight states.

- *Executive Champions.* Support from the governor of the state can be a critical factor in the successful implementation and sustainability of an RBA effort. However, executive branch

---

[20] See "Lesson Learned: Early Lessons from Performance-budgeting Pilots Help in Refinement" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida* and "Performance/Program Budgeting Began with Two Pilots" and "Use of Performance Budgeting Information Varies" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

[21] See "Uses of Incentive Fund Results Orientation" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*

[22] See "Interim Policy Council Designed to Carry Out Recommendations of Strategic Plan" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia.*

[23] See "Lessons Learned from Oregon's RBA Efforts" in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon.*

[24] See "Lesson Learned: Milestones Reflect Dynamic Nature of the State, and Thus Need to be Updated" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

support is not enough to sustain an effort. Building in support among those who are "in the pipeline" to move into leadership positions can increase the likelihood that the RBA effort will be sustained. For example, Oregon's RBA system has been supported by three governors, because early efforts were made to build support among existing leaders, two of whom later became governor.

- *Legislative Champions*. Champions in the legislature, particularly among the leadership, can lead to the passage of accountability legislation. Legislative champions from both houses and from influential committees is crucial. For example, North Carolina had early champions in both houses of the legislature, whose support was critical for passage of the performance budgeting legislation.[25] Garnering legislative support is an ongoing process, especially in states with term limits. Since turn-over in legislatures is frequent, states have found that it is important to build ongoing relationships with the legislature to ensure sustainability. One way to build support in the legislature despite changes is to build support among legislative staff or legislative agencies, as has been done in Florida.[26]

- *Agency Directors and Staff.* The support of agency directors is essential for RBA efforts to succeed within agencies. Agency directors can voice their support for the efforts, demonstrate how results data can be used for improved decision making, and develop mechanisms to involve agency staff in the design and implementation of RBA efforts. For example, the support of the directors of two key agencies in Vermont has translated into support among other staff in these agencies.

- *Other Stakeholders.* In many cases, stakeholders representing a variety of organizations as well as the public, have helped move RBA forward. For example, in Ohio, support from families has been critical for the Ohio Family and Children First initiative; therefore, family members now constitute an advisory board that provides regular input into the initiative.[27] In Iowa, support from labor, education, and business, among others, has been important; the importance of these groups is recognized by their presence on the Council on Human Investment.[28]

---

[25] See "Use of Performance Budgeting Information Varies" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

[26] See "Performance Program Evaluations and Justification Reviews Enable In-Depth Examination of Programs" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida.*

[27] See "Cabinet Council Relies on Workgroups to Provide Advice, Input, Guidance, and Staff" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida.*

[28] See "History of the Council on Human Investment" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa.*

Table 4. Selected Champions of RBA Efforts

State	Examples of Champions of State RBA Efforts
Florida	Early support by Governor Chiles and Lieutenant Governor Buddy McKay led to the development of the 1994 accountability legislation, and the establishment of a permanent body responsible for statewide benchmarks. Early champions in the legislature were integral to moving the process along. In addition, the private sector has been an important force in the movement to results-based budgeting and statewide benchmarks; it has been an important ally, helping to bring credibility and sustainability to the effort.
Georgia	Governor Zell Miller has actively supported the state's move toward RBA. Governor Miller initiated the Policy Council, which focuses the state on improving results for children and families. This Council consists of leaders representing agencies, businesses, and citizens — many of whom also actively champion the RBA effort in the state. This diverse group has helped to bring credibility and trust to the Council. Each group has brought specific strengths to the process and helped the Council to be more effective. Trust in the members of the Council helped bring non-traditional groups to work together to find solutions to problems facing children and families in the state.
Iowa	Lieutenant Governor Joy Corning supports the state's RBA efforts by serving as Chair of the Council on Human Investment — the seat of most of the state's RBA activities. Many of the Council members also champion the effort. The Council is a bi-partisan group composed of members who represent Iowa's geographic and economic diversity, lending it credibility throughout the state.
Minnesota	Governor Arne Carlson has actively supported the development of the state's cross-sector RBA effort, the Minnesota Milestones. Governor Carlson initiated the Minnesota Milestones through an Executive Order, and has voiced his support for them at meetings with agency staff, as well as at public gatherings.
North Carolina	Two early champions in the legislature supported the move toward RBA in North Carolina. The Speaker of the House and the Senate President supported the movement to a performance budget and encouraged the State Office of Planning and Budget and the State Office of Budget and Management to proceed with the pilots.
Oregon	Three governors have supported the RBA effort in Oregon. The effort began with the support of Governor Goldschmidt, who personally voiced his support for the development of the Oregon Benchmarks. Subsequently, Governors Roberts and Kitzhaber have supported the Oregon Benchmarks.
Vermont	Cornelius Hogan, Commissioner of the Agency of Human Services, and Rick Mills, Secretary of Education, began Vermont's focus on RBA in the late 1980s. Since then, champions throughout the Agency of Human Services and the Department of Education have supported the RBA effort and have moved it forward.

Incorporate Training and Technical Assistance

States and localities need education, training, and technical assistance in identifying and overcoming challenges in designing and implementing RBA systems. Several types of training are being provided by the eight case study states:

- *Hands-on training.* States are providing hands-on training by helping staff identify the goals and measures and by working through solutions to problems that are directly relevant to staff. For example, in North Carolina, state agency staff work directly with the office of planning to receive hands-on training.[29]

- *Manuals and workbooks.* Many states, including Iowa and Oregon, have developed manuals and workbooks to assist those charged with designing and implementing RBA.[30]

- *Technical assistance and consultation.* Some states provide technical assistance and consultation to those responsible for RBA systems. For example, in Georgia and Minnesota, technical assistance is provided by external consultants. In Florida, consultation is provided by an office within the state legislative auditor's office.[31]

Table 5. Examples of RBA Training and Technical Assistance Efforts

State	Description of training and technical assistance efforts
Florida	The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (an office within the state legislative auditor's office) plays a consultative role to agencies by helping them to identify the programs to be included in program performance budgeting. It helps the substantive committees of the legislature evaluate agency performance measures that are approved and submitted by the Governor's Office, and verifies the performance data reported by the agencies. In addition, it conducts in-depth studies (performance justification reviews) of agencies that have implemented performance-based budgeting. The Office of Planning and Budget also provides training and technical assistance to help agencies develop their strategic plans and meet the performance budgeting requirements. Finally, the Florida Department of Management Services has a statewide contract through which state agencies may access several private consulting firms for assistance in strategic planning and performance measures.

[29] See "OSPL and OSBM Provide Technical Assistance and Guidance to Agencies" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

[30] See "History of Budgeting for Results Effort" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa* and "Benchmarks Used in Contracting Process: in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon.*

[31] See "Performance-Based Program Budgeting: A Shift Toward Increased Agency Flexibility And Accountability" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida.*

State	Description of training and technical assistance efforts
Georgia	A task force within the Georgia Policy Council for Children and Families, an evaluation steering committee, and three staff committees (evaluation, finance, and service strategy committees) provide documentation, training, and technical assistance in helping communities to develop self-evaluation and accountability capacity. A national evaluation consulting firm, Metis Associates, is providing assistance to selected RBA efforts in the state in developing self-evaluation approaches that can be implemented to assess local progress toward attaining the benchmarks on the priority areas identified by the community. To help the state implement a performance-based budgeting approach, the Office of Planning and Budget has made staff available to agencies to assist them with the preparation of strategic plans and outcomes.
Iowa	A task force within the Council on Human Investment has produced a technical and training manual designed to assist agencies in developing results-oriented performance measures. This task force will also be responsible for helping agencies to collect the data.
Minnesota	Training for developing the performance measures has been provided by three different state agencies: The Department of Finance has provided training on performance budgeting for agency heads, program managers, and budget staff; the Department of Administration has provided training to selected state agencies; and the legislative audit committee has provided assistance to agencies upon their request. In addition, consultants from the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) at the University of Minnesota have provided technical assistance and training.
North Carolina	Training and technical assistance in the state's performance/program budget approach are provided by the state planning and budget offices. The planning office has designated analysts to train staff and provide technical assistance. The budget office has designated budget analysts to assist agencies in the planning processes. Within each department, a planning liaison works with department staff to develop operational plans and meet program performance budget requirements. The planning office has developed an eight-step process that agencies follow to conduct their program review, and has also worked with the legislative committee chairpersons and the legislative fiscal research staff to assist them in understanding the performance budgeting approach.
Ohio	The state has designated a workgroup called the Action Team within a state cabinet council to provide training and technical assistance regarding strategic planning, continuous learning, making linkages across and between programs and/or organizations, organizing diverse state and local stakeholder groups, and collecting and reporting results data. The Team is comprised of 20 professionals on loan from each of the Cabinet Council agencies. The Action Team is organized into subgroups based on the technical assistance areas of budgeting, planning, governance, program design, management, evaluation, and community organization.
Oregon	The Oregon Commission on Children and Families provides a wide range of training and technical assistance to localities. For example, the state office sponsors a symposium for representatives from localities to share information on best practices; the structure and agenda of the symposium are based on the needs of the localities. The state office also disseminates technical assistance guides that include critical information for implementing the RBA efforts.
Vermont	Technical assistance to local RBA efforts has been largely provided by consultants funded through foundation grants.

Designate Funds, Staff, and Computer Support

The design and implementation of RBA systems require designated funds and personnel. States use a variety of funding sources for this purpose: federal Family Preservation and Family Support funds, foundation grants, and reallocation of state funds and staff. States in our study recognized the importance of designating specific staff to direct and implement the effort. Table 6 provides an overview of how each state designates funds and personnel. Two of the primary approaches used by the case study states are to:

- *Use existing staff/reallocate.* Many states in our study have reallocated staff to work on child and family RBA efforts. For example, in Ohio, the state Action Team consists of child and family staff from state agencies.[32] In Iowa, state agency staff responsible for planning and evaluation are working on the design and implementation of the RBA efforts.[33]

- *Leverage other funding sources.* Many states have foundation funds designated to improve child and family outcomes which can be used, in part, to fund the design and implementation of the RBA effort. For example, in Georgia, funding for the early RBA work was provided by The Pew Charitable Trusts as part of a large grant to help states reform child and family services.[34]

Table 6. Examples of Funding and Human Resources Devoted to Selected RBA Efforts

State	Description of funding and staff support of selected efforts
Florida	The legislation authorizing the establishment of performance budgeting and statewide benchmarks authorized the establishment of a new agency charged with providing technical assistance and training. It also provided funding for the new Government Accountability for the People (GAP) Commission. Funding for GAP comes from general funds in the legislature, which varies from year to year. GAP also relies on corporate donations and in-kind contributions for agencies.
Georgia	Early foundation support for state- and community-level accountability efforts facilitated a focus on meaningful, people-level results. Re-deployed staff across all major child-serving agencies (Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, and Medicaid) have formed a core team for state planning and community support.

[32] See "Cabinet Council Relies on Workgroups to Provide Advice, Input, Guidance, and Staff" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*
[33] See "Summary of Florida's RBA Efforts" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida* and "Political Context for Children and Families" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*
[34] See "History of the Policy Council" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia.*

Iowa	The Council on Human Investment, the entity in Iowa responsible for developing and sponsoring a system of performance management, is staffed by personnel within the Department of Management. The Council on Human Investment has relied on university researchers in the state to help develop and conduct a large-scale public opinion survey to determine Iowans' human service priorities.
Minnesota	Various resources were made available for the establishment of the Minnesota Milestones. The funding for the development of the Minnesota Milestones came in part from a one-time appropriation from the legislature to the Minnesota Planning Office. In addition, Minnesota Planning had available resources such as demographers and planners on staff, who were able to undertake the development and reporting of the Milestones. The cost of developing agency performance reporting systems was absorbed by individual agencies. Agencies reallocated staff time for training as well as for the development of performance measures.
North Carolina	The state offices of budgeting and planning staff the state's RBA effort. Legislation that established Smart Start, the state's initiative for young children, mandated a performance-based evaluation and designated funds for this purpose. At the local level, support for evaluation capacity in local partnerships is provided by consultants and the North Carolina Partnership for Children.
Ohio	The state-level RBA efforts rely largely on staff re-deployed from child and family agencies. In addition, each county council receives a small amount of funding from the state annually for activities such as staff support, training, and strategic planning retreats.
Oregon	Most of the state's RBA efforts rely on state-funded staff to develop and report RBA data. For example, state-funded staff from the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, the Department of Human Resources, and the Oregon Progress Board devote time to RBA efforts.
Vermont	Early and continued foundation support has facilitated the development of RBA systems, particularly at the community level. Vermont's Success by Six initiative, which allows early intervention funds to be used to conduct evaluation work, has helped significantly in enabling communities and the state to gather information on results. The Planning Division of the Agency of Human Services has responsibility for the collection of data for state-level and community-level results reporting.

Develop Reporting for a Variety of Audiences

Reporting to key stakeholders is an important component of RBA efforts, and states use a variety of formats and media to report their results data. To tailor reports to different audiences, it is important to consider what audiences need, how frequently they need it, and what types of information and formats appeal to them. Different audiences that the eight states in our study have targeted include:

- *The Public*: States such as Florida, Oregon, and Vermont produce documents which report to the public on important outcomes, or benchmarks.[35] These reports translate jargon,

[35] See "GAP Reports Are Used to Publicize Florida Governments' Work" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida*; "How Are Benchmark Data Reported?" in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon*; and "The Planning Division of AHS Has Responsibility for Data Collection and Compilation" in *Aiming for Accountability: Vermont*.

include graphic illustrations, and are designed to convey information quickly that citizens can use to understand what is happening in the state.

- *Legislators.* States that are implementing performance budgeting are producing reports that are targeted to legislators to assist with budgeting. To be useful, these report results data in categories that are consistent with the legislative committee's jurisdiction. For example, in North Carolina, line-item budgets are provided in addition to RBA budgets, to ensure that legislators have information that is necessary for decision making.

- *Public Managers.* States are producing reports that provide information on agency progress in meeting objectives, including information about why objectives are or are not being met. This type of information generally comes from program evaluations. If program evaluation data are not available, information about the context of changes can also illuminate why changes are occurring. Florida and Minnesota are both producing reports that provide information to state agency directors.[36]

Build Relationships

To ensure that RBA efforts are successfully implemented and sustained, building personal relationships among key leaders, service providers, and those affected by RBA is essential. While RBA is a reform effort that is designed to improve the results of government programs, changes in government programs affect those providing services, as well as those receiving services. Recognizing the personal aspect of RBA, many states have built in mechanisms to ensure that the voices of those involved in the process are heard. Each of the states in our study has developed ways to acknowledge the personal aspect of RBA and to ensure that relationships are fostered that will lead to the successful implementation and sustainability of the effort. States that have taken into account personal relationships have:

- *Built on relationships formed through earlier reform efforts.* Cultivating buy-in among those involved with and affected by RBA can be done effectively if those charged with the effort look at the history of reform efforts in the state and build on existing relationships formed through earlier efforts. States such as Ohio engaged individuals who had formed relationships among key service providers through earlier systems reform efforts.[37]

- *Engaged individuals who have credibility.* For an RBA effort to succeed, those charged with carrying it out must have credibility among state and local agency staff. Individuals can gain credibility in a variety of ways. First, becoming familiar with the state and local context and tailoring RBA to that context can help individuals gain credibility. Secondly, engaging those most affected by RBA in the design and implementation of RBA can help individuals gain trust and credibility.

---

[36] See "Agencies Must Report Annually on the Performance of their Programs" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida* and "Uses of Performance Reports" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

[37] See "Lesson Learned: Relationships and Trust Key to Implementation of County Family and Children First Councils" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*

CAN RBA HELP "MANAGE FOR RESULTS?"

This section of our report draws on the experiences of our eight case study states to examine the potential of results-based accountability (RBA) systems to bring about improved results, especially for child and family services.

Expectations vs. Current Practice: Is There a Match?

Recent reports demonstrate that expectations about RBA for child and family services vary. Among the expectations are that RBA will:

- Facilitate collaboration among stakeholders on common goals
- Empower frontline workers
- Reduce regulation, resulting in greater local decision making
- Demonstrate the results of public investments, thereby increasing public faith in government
- Allow policymakers to budget for results.[38]

Analysis of our case studies revealed that these expectations may be overly ambitious, both with regard to general RBA systems, as well as those designed to improve results for child and family services. Several factors account for the discrepancy between research expectations and experiences in the field:

- *RBA for child and family services is relatively new.* Until recently, child and family services results data have been collected and used mostly for small research and demonstration projects, rather than for ongoing RBA use. In the areas of law enforcement, health, and education, many agencies have been collecting and reporting results data for at least a decade, and therefore have more experience with RBA than child and family services have.

- *Changing thinking takes time.* Those responsible for child and family services must shift services from following rules and regulations to focusing on results. Likewise, many have seen reform efforts that were not successfully implemented and are skeptical of "jumping on the bandwagon" of something that may be short lived.

- *Expectations about RBA often do not account for the time, financial resources, technical capacity, and human resources that are required.* For RBA efforts to meet expectations, they must be designed to promote improvement and flexibility. Financial, technical, and human resources must be devoted to the design and implementation of the efforts. Further, expectations about how quickly results can be achieved must be adjusted, as it takes time to develop RBA systems and for interventions to produce results.

[38] For a list of important RBA sources, see Appendix C.

- *Leadership and resources must be committed to the effort.* Sustained commitment from bipartisan leadership is essential for the successful design and implementation of RBA efforts. Leaders must allocate funds, personnel, and time to the effort. Political and financial pressures can diminish support for the efforts over time, thus reducing the chances of successful design and implementation.

- *No single RBA model exists.* While some states and localities have a longer history of RBA than others, there is no single model that can be replicated across states and localities. As such, it takes time to design and implement an RBA effort that is tailored to the unique political, demographic, and social context of a particular state or community.

The Challenges of RBA Design and Implementation: Reconciling Expectations with Experience to Produce Results

For RBA efforts to be successfully implemented and sustained, we must be realistic about what we expect from them. Our research on the efforts of eight states suggests that RBA may have the potential to be a powerful tool to initiate and enhance systems of continuous improvement and learning. Policymakers, public managers, workers, and citizens in the eight case study states use RBA to monitor child and family services, learn what is working, change strategies accordingly, and, ultimately, improve outcomes. To be a useful tool for continuous improvement, RBA efforts first must define a vision and articulate desired results and measures, and then must determine the use of results data for program improvement and accountability. Through this process, RBA efforts must achieve four goals in order to be successful. They must:

- Engage people in defining solutions to problems
- Help program managers and providers plan and manage
- Demonstrate results of investments in child and family services
- Promote innovation.

This report concludes by identifying important challenges in implementing these four goals and provides examples of some of the solutions that states have identified to meet the challenges. (For specific details, we refer the reader to the individual case studies, which describe specific state experiences.)[39]

Engaging People in Defining Solutions to Problems

RBA can engage people in defining solutions to social problems both through involving them in the process of developing RBA systems and through using RBA data. The *process* of developing an RBA effort can engage policymakers, service providers, public managers, and citizens in defining problems and solutions. RBA *data* can be used by people to understand whether child and family programs are meeting goals. However, the experiences of states which have done this suggest that there are challenges to doing so, including the following:

[39] See *Aiming for Accountability*, Harvard Family Research Project.

Challenge:
RBA efforts can increase fragmentation because different agencies, departments, and funders often have differing RBA requirements. Differing requirements and priorities can result in multiple — and often conflicting — demands for information.

Solutions:
The eight states in our study have employed a variety of methods to address this challenge. To overcome this challenge, those charged with designing and implementing RBA efforts can:

Assess existing and planned efforts. This is an important step for those responsible for designing and implementing RBA efforts and may result in consolidated planning efforts. In some cases, assessing other efforts may result in the continuation of separate planning efforts, but ones informed by the other activities in the state or locality. This has been done by the Georgia Policy Council and the Vermont State Team for Children and Families, both of which coordinate their activities with other child and family efforts in the state.[40]

Develop a strategic plan and use it to establish priorities for conflicting RBA requirements. Local service providers, who often feel they are reacting to the funders' priorities, have found it useful to develop their own strategic plans to guide their responses to funders' requests. Some funders will be flexible about the results requirements if local providers have plans with clearly articulated results data that appear reliable and demonstrate linkages with their own priorities. Some localities, for example, those in Oregon and Minnesota, have found that the development of sound results-based plans have helped them to bring in additional foundation dollars, as well as state block grant dollars.[41]

Develop an agreed upon framework of standard definitions and measures. In many cases, multiple RBA efforts exist simultaneously — each with its own processes and nomenclature. States and communities have found that one way to begin to consolidate different RBA efforts is to establish a standard set of definitions and terms. This can be accomplished, as it has in Florida, North Carolina, and Oregon, through the leadership of one entity that provides handbooks and training.[42]

Adjust expectations: Complete alignment will never be possible, but a general framework is something to strive for. Different programs reflect the political will of different

---

[40] For details, see the section on "The Policy Council for Children and Families: The Statewide Point of Accountability" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia* and the section on "State Team for Children and Families Focuses Agencies on Collaboration and Results" in *Aiming for Accountability: Vermont.*

[41] For details, see the section on "Oregon Commission for Children and Families" in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon* and the section on "Family Services and Children's Mental Health Collaboratives" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

[42] For details, see the section on "Training and Technical Assistance have been Key to Implementing PB^2" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida*, the section on "OSPL and OSBM Provide Technical Assistance and Guidance to Agencies" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina*, and the section on "Oregon Commission on Children and Families" in *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon.*

legislators; furthermore, foundations have their own priorities. While complete alignment is not a possibility, agreement on a general framework work is.

Challenge:
Stakeholders involved in designing and implementing RBA, especially citizens, can get "burned out" by the process, since reaching consensus on goals and measures can be tedious, time-consuming, and jargon-filled.

Solutions:
Those charged with designing RBA efforts can:

Explain the process and provide materials that translate jargon. Explain to those involved that the collaborative processes required by successful RBA systems take significantly more time and effort than making executive decisions. The democratic nature of these bodies can be very frustrating, but it is essential to ensure that all voices are "bought in" to the idea. States have found that it is helpful to develop and disseminate materials that make RBA understandable to a wide-ranging audience (as has been done in Florida and Minnesota).[43] Stakeholders can quickly become frustrated with jargon, and orienting them to the terms and process is time well spent.

Establish work groups to work out technical details. Smaller work groups can be established to address the details of RBA design and implementation, rather than engaging all of those involved in the RBA process in deliberations over every aspect of the process. Such groups can make recommendations to the larger oversight body, as they have done in Georgia and Ohio.[44]

Helping Public Managers and Service Providers with Decision Making
The use of RBA data can help with decision making among public managers and service providers monitoring progress toward achieving results. RBA data, coupled with program evaluation or other data, can be used to assess service strategies.

Challenge:
Training or technical capacity is necessary to design and implement RBA efforts properly. However, training and technical assistance are often inadequate. As a result, systems can be ill-conceived, targets can be unrealistically set, and public skepticism can increase.

---

[43] For details, see the section on "Building Relationships and Support at a Variety of Levels Is Necessary" in *Aiming for Accountability: Florida* and section on "Milestones Are Designed to Encourage All Minnesotans to Solve Problems Facing the State" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

[44] For details, see the section on "Interim Policy Council Designed to Carry out Recommendations of Strategic Plan" and "Results Accountability Task Force Developed Process for Identifying Goals and Benchmarks" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia* and the section on "Cabinet Council Relies on Workgroups to Provide Advice, Input, Guidance, and Staff" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio.*

Solutions:
To overcome this challenge, those charged with designing and implementing RBA efforts can:

Set aside funding and staff for developing and implementing the RBA efforts. Many states have established mechanisms and support for training and technical assistance through legislation or through agency reallocation. Other states have found that leveraging federal, state, and foundation resources can help ensure that training, technical assistance, and data capacity are available. States have used dollars for child and family "systems change" initiatives, initiatives designed to improve child and family outcomes, and to finance training and technical assistance efforts. By using dollars to strengthen the infrastructure, managers have been able to demonstrate to funders that the investment will reap benefits beyond the grant. Others, such as Vermont, have used foundation technical assistance consultants to help establish training and technical assistance systems.[45]

Challenge:
The capacity to collect and analyze data is essential to successful RBA work, but data and information systems capacity are often lacking or outdated.

Solutions:
To overcome this challenge, those responsible for RBA efforts can:

Become entrepreneurial to garner necessary resources. Some states, such as Minnesota, have drawn on existing expertise.[46] Also, states have used designated state demographers and planners to build the data capacity in the office that is responsible for collecting the information from other state and local agencies. Others have used existing federal and state surveys to obtain new data.[47] Some have leveraged the Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT data collection efforts to get state survey data.

Consider centralizing certain data collection and reporting functions rather than having each locality "reinvent the wheel." Having one central location responsible for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data can increase efficiency and help agencies and localities overcome the obstacle of insufficient capacity. None of the eight states in this study currently has one large database that links state and local agencies. Rather, most have a central depository of data reported by separate departments and localities.

---

[45] For details, see section on "Broad Stakeholder Input Informs the Selection of Goals" in *Aiming for Accountability: Vermont.*
[46] For details, see section on "Governor's Commitment to Improving Results in Minnesota Led to Minnesota Milestones" and "Citizen Input Guided the Milestones Development" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*
[47] For details, see section on "Building Capacity to Report Results is Integral to Process" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia.*

Demonstrating Results of Investments in Child and Family Services

To demonstrate the results of investments in child and family services, RBA data must be coupled with cost-benefit data produced through program evaluation. Nonetheless, RBA data can be used by programs and agencies to monitor progress toward achieving results.

Challenge:
RBA data can be misused to hold public managers and service providers accountable for results over which they do not have control.

Solution:
Take steps to ensure that RBA reports are well conceived. Prior to collecting and reporting data, those planning and implementing the effort must be well trained and must consider how the data will be used. It is important that the responsibility and authority over results be clearly articulated at the beginning of the RBA effort and be updated on a regular basis. In addition, it is important to consider early on the other factors that could contribute to changes in outcomes. Such information should be included in any reports so that if changes occur that are beyond the responsibility of the government agency or service provider, this information is provided. Georgia and Minnesota produce reports with this important context information.[48]

Promoting Innovation

To reach its potential as a tool for continuous improvement, RBA must be used for innovation rather than as a punitive measure. The process of developing RBA systems can help to identify and eliminate unnecessary barriers and can promote innovation.

Challenge:
Public managers and service providers may become frustrated when charged with identifying solutions that they cannot implement due to constraints of existing rules and regulations.

Solution:
Create processes for systematically examining barriers to achieving results. Committees composed of policymakers and public managers that regularly review barriers can identify and eliminate unnecessary regulations, while at the same time ensuring the continuation of necessary regulations governing quality, access, and equity. Ohio and Georgia have both set up such committees to review and eliminate unnecessary barriers.[49]

Challenge:
Political, social, and demographic factors can impede the successful design and implementation of an RBA effort.

---

[48] See "Policy Council Issues Benchmarks Report to the Public" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia* and the section "DHS Issues Performance Reports" in *Aiming for Accountability: Minnesota.*

[49] See "Previous Efforts to Eliminate Duplication Led to OFCF Strategic Planning Efforts" in *Aiming for Accountability: Ohio* and "Focus on Results Used by Community Partnerships to Identify Barriers to Progress" in *Aiming for Accountability: Georgia.*

Solution:
Learn from states and communities with similar political, social, and demographic contexts. While RBA efforts must be tailored to take into account state and local governance structure, as well as the relative power of the governor, legislature, agencies, and county commissioners, lessons can be learned from similar states. It is important to tailor RBA efforts to the size and demographic nature of the state. What works in a small state may not work in a large state, and may need to be modified to ensure that key stakeholders are involved in the process. Therefore, it is important to examine those lessons that are most likely to be transferable.

Challenge:
Adversaries can oppose an RBA effort simply for political reasons. This lack of support can jeopardize the effort.

Solution:
Cultivate bipartisan champions and champions at numerous levels. Champions are leaders in state government, such as the governor, legislative leaders, directors of agencies, lobbyists, and the staff of those who are most influential in state and local government. While having leaders voice their support is critical, it is not enough; it is also important to cultivate grassroots support. In many states we heard that for the RBA effort to be sustained, champions are needed at the leadership, grassroots, and mid-level manager levels. States have cultivated these in a variety of ways. For example, Iowa and Vermont both have developed state committees consisting of diverse stakeholders to oversee the RBA effort.[50]

Challenge:
Legislative budget and appropriations committees which are categorical in nature may not use RBA data if reports are not specifically tailored to their committees.

Solutions:
Those charged with designing and implementing RBA efforts can:

Design RBA reports with legislators in mind and make sure reports are succinct and jargon-free. Such reports should be user-friendly, should include data by category that corresponds to legislative committee, and should include line-item budget data, where relevant. Legislative committee members and staff report using RBA data mostly when they are agency or program performance data. Such performance data speak directly to

[50] See "Agency Planning Cycle: An Ongoing Effort" and "Enterprise-Wide Strategic Planning: An Example of the Right Hand Knowing What the Left Is Doing" in *Aiming for Accountability: Iowa* and "The State Team Brings Together a Variety of Stakeholders" and "Broad Stakeholder Input Informs the Selection of Goals" in *Aiming for Accountability: Vermont.*

their committee. North Carolina has taken this into account and includes both line-item budget data as well as RBA data in its reports to the legislature.[51]

Make sure RBA reports are targeted to constituents. Legislators in our study report that RBA has the greatest impact when it is referred to them by their constituents. Few legislators in our study were familiar with state RBA documents, but many knew where the state and their district ranked in terms of indicators of child well-being. When prompted, many of the legislators informed us that they knew about this because it was reported in their local papers and because concerned constituents brought it to their attention.

Challenge:
Support for the RBA effort wanes after the early implementation phase.

Solutions:
Build relationships among key stakeholders in the state and establish trust and widespread support for the effort. The states in our study report different methods of building these relationships, but all report that establishing positive relationships is critical to the success of the effort.

Develop a process of engaging new voices in the RBA process. Since the design and implementation of RBA is an ongoing process, it is important to establish mechanisms to bring new stakeholders into decision-making bodies.

[51] See "Performance/Program Budgeting System Focuses the State on Results" in *Aiming for Accountability: North Carolina.*

CONCLUSION

Results-based accountability (RBA) has the potential to improve child and family outcomes if it is used as a tool to help managers, policymakers, and citizens see what is working, change service strategies accordingly, and promote learning. Our research found 11 characteristics common to successful RBA efforts. Briefly, the efforts in our case study:

- Began with strategic planning
- Learned from past efforts
- Considered appropriate mechanisms to institutionalize RBA work
- Clearly identified roles and responsibilities
- Took into account political contexts
- Developed over time
- Engaged champions
- Built relationships
- Incorporated training and technical assistance
- Designated funds, staff, and computer support
- Developed reporting for a variety of audiences.

Our study found that current expectations about the benefits of an RBA approach are not aligned with the experiences of those currently developing RBA systems, especially in the area of child and family services. This can be attributed to a number of factors including: RBA for child and family services is relatively new; shifting to a results focus takes leadership, time, effort, and financial resources; and no single RBA model exists on which to base subsequent efforts. Our analysis revealed that for RBA to be used for continuous improvement, states designing and implementing it should strive to:

- Engage diverse voices in defining problems and their solutions
- Help program managers and providers as they plan services
- Demonstrate results of investments in child and family services
- Promote innovation in the design of RBA systems.

RBA appears to have great potential as a tool for learning and improvement, but the experiences of states demonstrate that to reach this potential, substantial investments in time, technical, human, and financial resources are required. Once these investments are made, the next important step in the development of RBA efforts is to experiment with innovative approaches to using RBA data. For RBA systems truly to reach their potential, RBA data cannot be used to punish services providers who have not had time to develop RBA data or produce results. Our research suggests that when viewed as a tool for improvement, rather than a tool to punish programs, RBA can lead people to engage in common problem solving; help those responsible for public programs to plan and manage; demonstrate the results of public investments; and promote innovation.

APPENDIX A

Results-Based Accountability: An Overview of RBA Efforts in Eight States

This Appendix provides background information on the primary RBA efforts ongoing in each state in our study. In addition to highlighting the major efforts, this section describes the unique aspects of each state's RBA efforts.[52]

[52] For a complete description of each state's efforts, see the *Aiming for Accountability* reports.

FLORIDA

Summary of Florida's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

The GAP Benchmarks. The GAP Benchmarks are a set of statewide benchmarks, performance measures, and performance targets in seven program areas. The GAP Commission, a citizen board, reviews and publicly reports the benchmarks.

Performance-based program budgeting. Performance-based program budgeting in Florida requires that funding decisions be made on the basis of state agency performance. Agencies submit annual performance reports which outline program goals and objectives and performance measures and standards to the governor and the legislature.

The accountability efforts of the Florida Department of Children and Families. The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has taken the mandate to establish a performance budget as an opportunity to develop a comprehensive accountability system that includes both planning and budgeting. The department has based this effort in an interrelated system of evaluation, management controls, and Inspector General functions.

Unique Features of Florida's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Florida provides a useful example of a large, diverse state which has sought to develop a comprehensive accountability system that involves a wide variety of stakeholders while supporting the improved performance of public programs. Florida's accountability framework is composed of three components: statewide benchmarks, performance-based budgeting, and agency-level strategic planning. The statewide benchmarks provide information on cross-agency outcomes in seven areas. Performance budgeting and agency planning, which are required by state law to be linked, focus on the goals, objectives, and measures of specific state agency programs.

Several aspects of Florida's efforts are notable:

- Active support and involvement by a variety of stakeholders, including the legislature and the private sector
- A strong focus on training and technical assistance in the state, provided by the governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the legislatively-mandated Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
- A target budget approach used in the Florida DCF, which identifies specific outcomes for the different populations that the department serves.

GEORGIA

Summary of Georgia's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Policy Council for Children and Families' Results-Based Accountability Efforts. The Georgia Policy Council for Children and Families is a new governance structure designed to focus the separate initiatives for children and families on agreed-upon outcomes. The Policy Council is composed of business and civic leaders and managers of the state's health and human services agencies. It is responsible for defining core results; developing and adopting a comprehensive state plan to coordinate services; and coordinating and evaluating services focusing on a single set of outcomes for children and families at both the state and county levels.

Results Focus of Family Connection Communities and Community Partnerships. The Family Connection Communities and Community Partnerships operate under the Policy Council to improve outcomes for children and their families through strengthening family, community, and school linkages. The Family Connection provides flexible dollars that allow local communities to implement innovative service delivery ideas, close gaps in the continuity of services, and improve the overall ability of agencies to serve families. A sub-set of the Family Connection Communities are Community Partnerships, legal governance bodies which are designated by state and local governments as the single county entity with authority and responsibility for achieving results.

State Performance Measures Mandated by the Budget Accountability and Planning Act. Performance measures are required by all state agencies in Georgia as a result of the 1993 Budget Accountability and Planning Act. Under this legislation, each agency and the state as a whole must produce a strategic plan.

Unique Features of the Georgia Case Study

Georgia's results-based accountability (RBA) efforts for children and families began with data — the state's 47th place national ranking in the Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT data.[53] This low ranking mobilized policymakers, service providers, business leaders, local grant makers, and other citizens to devise a variety of outcome-based and locally-administered approaches to improve the health and well-being of the state's children and families.

Most distinctive about Georgia's RBA efforts are:

- The top-down and bottom-up approach to RBA that focuses a variety of stakeholders on results
- The early support by foundations to enable an emphasis on meaningful, people-level results
- The climate of change that supported risk-taking and innovation

---

[53] KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being.* (1997). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. This publication provides data on the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children.

- The establishment of mechanisms to address concerns about locally-determined strategies and accountability, as well as statewide oversight.

IOWA

Summary of Iowa's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

There are five main ongoing efforts in Iowa, each linked to the statewide goal of using overarching policy outcomes to guide programming.

The Council on Human Investment. The Council on Human Investment (CHI), housed in the Department of Management, is responsible for developing and sponsoring a system of performance management for all of Iowa state government. CHI is charged with developing an outcomes-based performance budget, an investment budget model, and methods to determine returns on investments. An important aspect of CHI's early efforts was a large-scale public opinion survey to determine Iowans' human service priorities. After CHI obtained the results from the poll, a series of focus groups was held across the state to enhance the data collected by the poll.

Innovation Zones. The Innovation Zones, selected in April 1997, are community collaboratives working in partnership with the state to redirect public funds in order to achieve improved outcomes for children and their families. The collaborative nature of these zones reflects Iowa's commitment to foster new relationships among state and local agencies. The zones are guided by the Innovation Zones Board, which is housed within CHI.

Department of Management Strategic Planning. In September 1996, the Department of Management proposed a "planning continuum" to ensure consistency across all agencies as they implement a results-based service delivery system. At the crux of the plan is the use of overarching policy outcomes to set agency goals. Once agency goals are established, a new round of planning occurs during which agencies work together to form an enterprise-wide (i.e., inter-agency) strategic plan. The purpose of the enterprise-wide planning is to achieve common cross-state goals with collaboration, not duplication.

Budgeting for Results. The multi-agency Budgeting for Results (BFR) Task Force developed a system of results-based budgeting for the Iowa state government. The three-step BFR approach links resource allocation, performance measurement, and policymaking. Overarching policy objectives serve as the foundation of the BFR model.

Department of Human Services Strategic Planning. Department of Human Services (DHS) has developed a strategic plan that identifies goals and time frames for the defining of results, indicators, and performance measures, and a plan for doing so in collaboration with stakeholders. Four DHS key outcomes teams have been designated to focus on the four outcome areas of self-sufficiency, stability, safety, and health for families. They work on developing agency-, program-, and client-level outcomes, as well as indicators, strategies, rationales, and inventories of services.

Unique Features of the Iowa Case Study

Iowa's multi-sector results efforts touch on the work of all executive branch state agencies and are linked with the movement toward budgeting for results. Three key features of the Iowa study provide useful insight into how results-based accountability (RBA) systems can develop:

- A statewide public opinion poll was used to provide valuable citizen input
- Statewide focus groups enhanced the RBA research process and "fleshed-out" results of the poll
- An enterprise-wide strategic planning provided a framework for collaborative efforts among agencies to achieve common cross-site goals.

MINNESOTA

Summary of Minnesota's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

The Minnesota Milestones. The Milestones, initially sponsored by Governor Arne Carlson, comprise the state's multi-sector results-based accountability (RBA) effort. The Executive Branch strategic planning agency, the Minnesota Planning Office, was responsible for the development of the Milestones. Minnesota Planning started the development of the Milestones by engaging in a strategic planning effort that involved input from citizens as well as agency staff.

The Children's Services Report Card. The Children's Services Report Card grew out of the Milestones. It reports data at a county level and is intended to be used by communities to measure how their children are faring.

Performance Reporting. The Minnesota legislature initiated Performance Reporting in 1993. It requires state agencies to develop strategic plans and to report performance measures biannually to the legislature. A second piece of legislation, the Omnibus K-12 Education, was passed in 1995, which requires a different set of performance reports from the Department of Children, Families and Learning.

Family Service and Mental Health Collaborative Evaluation Activities. Evaluation activities of these local Collaboratives are designed to promote the local development and use of outcome measures. The Collaboratives are local entities, established by the legislature in 1993, which receive grants for collaboration. The Collaboratives are required to establish clear goals and outcome measures for addressing the health, developmental, education, and family-related needs of children and youth. Several outcome measures were specified, and Collaboratives have access to a university research group that provides technical assistance and training.

Unique Features of Minnesota's RBA Efforts

The Minnesota case study provides an interesting example of a relatively homogeneous midwestern state's experiences designing, implementing, and refining multiple RBA efforts. The most widely known effort in Minnesota, the Minnesota Milestones, represents a multi-sector effort, modeled on the Oregon Benchmarks.[54]

Several aspects of Minnesota's RBA efforts are especially noteworthy:

- The existence of multiple RBA efforts with differing origins and emphases, including the Executive Branch Minnesota Milestones, which focus on population-level goals and the legislature's performance accountability for state agencies
- The emphasis on "home grown" services, which leads to grassroots articulation and reporting of results data rather than a centralized RBA approach
- The refinement of the Milestones and agency performance measures to build on lessons learned and reflect new priorities of the state's citizens.

[54] See *Aiming for Accountability: Oregon* for details about Oregon's experience.

NORTH CAROLINA

Summary of North Carolina's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Performance/Program Budgeting. North Carolina began implementing a performance/program budgeting (P/PB) approach in 1991. The purpose of P/PB is to help the state improve government efficiency and effectiveness by eliminating overlap and duplication; establish priorities; preserve and improve the quality of state services; restructure and reform state service delivery; and strengthen management practices.[55] North Carolina, like many states, faces challenges in the implementation of P/PB; however, many believe that P/PB will play an important role in the state's government reform efforts. They note that P/PB has the potential to increase significantly the debate about what the state is doing and how it is doing it.

Department of Health and Human Services' Strategic Planning. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for programs related to health and human services. The identification of objectives and measures for DHHS programs began under its predecessor agency, the Department of Human Resources.

Smart Start. Smart Start is North Carolina's well-known and generally well-received program for young children. Established in legislation in 1993, *Smart Start* is a $90 million comprehensive early childhood education and health initiative. The primary goal of the public-private initiative is to ensure that, through improvements in access to quality, affordable child care, health care, and other family support services, every child in North Carolina enters kindergarten healthy and ready to succeed. *Smart Start*, nationally recognized as an innovative as well as effective initiative, will also continue to work to improve its administration and address demands for accountability. The foundation of strong evaluation research provides a strong basis to "be accountable."

Unique Features of North Carolina's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Since 1991, North Carolina has been implementing a results-based budgeting approach that requires state agencies to report to the General Assembly on the performance of their programs. The North Carolina DHHS reports on the results of programs related to health and human services. The state's largest and best-known initiative for children and families, *Smart Start*, also works within a framework of accountability, reporting regularly to the legislature and undertaking an extensive evaluation of important program outcomes.

Several features of North Carolina's results-based accountability efforts are noteworthy:

- The role of the budget and planning offices in training, collecting, and analyzing performance budget data
- The political context in which the child and family initiative has been implemented and the way in which data have been used to expand this initiative

---

[55] North Carolina Office of State Planning and Office of State Budget Management. *Primer to Performance/program budgeting.* 1995-1997. The North Carolina State Budget. Raleigh, NC: Author.

- The quasi-experimental evaluation design used to measure the success of the child and family services initiative.

OHIO

Summary of Ohio's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Ohio Families and Children First Initiative. The Ohio Families and Children First (OFCF) Initiative serves as a multi-agency "umbrella" to focus state and local service agencies on achieving better results for children and families. The initiative consists of multiple public and privately funded activities aimed at improving the school readiness of Ohio's children. The OFCF Initiative supports improved services and outcomes for young children and families through the creation of two innovative governance structures: a state cabinet-level Coordinating Council, designed to restructure the education and social systems to focus on results; and county-level councils, called Family and Children First (FCF) Councils, whose work informs the state's financing, organization, and delivery of children's services, and who coordinate many programs at the county level.

Early Start. Like the OFCF, the primary goal of the Early Start effort is to improve the school readiness of Ohio's children by providing an integrated system of services and supports at the county level. It targets children birth to age three whose environment, family, or health circumstances place them at risk, but who do not qualify for other programs. Administered by the Department of Health in collaboration with the OFCF, the program is operated by county councils at the local level.

Ohio Wellness Block Grant. Another new effort that focuses on improving results for Ohio's children is the Ohio Wellness Block Grant (WBG). This block grant provides flexible funds to community-based organizations to concentrate on family-focused, supportive, informational, educational, and health activities to improve the well-being of families and children. County FCF Councils are allowed to spend WBG dollars on three types of activities: community awareness, health, and education.

The Family Stability Incentive Fund. The Family Stability Incentive Fund is a new pilot project developed by the OFCF initiative, with the desired outcome of reducing the number of children and adolescents removed unnecessarily from their homes. In return for the successful reduction of out-of-home placement, county councils gain access to Incentive Fund dollars.

Unique Features of Ohio's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Ohio provides a useful example of a relatively large, diverse state that has sought to develop an results-based accountability (RBA) framework for child and family services. Ohio's experiences in consolidating state planning requirements to focus agencies on results is particularly informative to states with county-administered social services. Also of note is Ohio's experience in developing a framework that balances local authority and control with state technical assistance and guidance.

Several aspects of Ohio's RBA efforts are notable:

- The strong commitment of the governor in supporting results-oriented child and family services

- The comprehensive planning efforts that are designed to streamline government services by focusing on results
- The greater flexibility given to county councils for increased accountability
- The messages from the state to the counties regarding state expectations for focusing on results.

OREGON

Summary of Oregon's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

The Oregon Benchmarks. The Oregon Benchmarks are a set of 92 measurable outcomes that are part of the state's strategic vision, *Oregon Shines.* Overseen by the Oregon Progress Board, this seven-year-old, multi-sector, results-based accountability (RBA) effort has been widely adopted across the state, even by organizations not required to use them.

Oregon Commission on Children and Families. The Oregon Commission on Children and Families (OCCF) sets statewide policies for services to children and families in collaboration with state and local partners. One of the key features of the OCCF effort is that it calls for community-based comprehensive plans to provide services for children and families.

Oregon Option. The Oregon Option is the nationally groundbreaking agreement to design and test a results-oriented approach to delivery of governmental services across federal, state, and local lines. Operating under a legal agreement with the federal government, the Option works toward the achievement of outcomes related to key Benchmarks. Integral to this effort is intergovernmental collaboration around the Benchmarks.

Performance Measures. In 1993, legislation was passed giving the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) responsibility for ensuring that agency activities, including the establishment of performance measures, are aimed toward achieving Benchmarks. The DAS has developed state budget instructions that clarify how to determine performance measures that accurately reflect an agency's mission, as well as relate to obtainable benchmark data.

Community Partnership Team. The Community Partnership Team, within the Department of Human Resources (DHR), is designed to expand DHR's work with communities to define and deliver human services. The goal is to achieve the Oregon Benchmarks through collaborative community partnerships.

Unique Features of the Oregon Case Study

Oregon is widely viewed as the state that is the farthest along in designing and implementing RBA. Since 1989, Oregon has been striving to achieve an integrated system of accountability that stresses the importance of local, state, and federal involvement. Analysis of its five efforts (See below) reveals many important lessons for other states as they attempt to establish RBA systems:

- The need for champions has been a critical element for successful RBA efforts in Oregon. Leaders in key places — the executive branch, legislature, and private sector — have all been key to the success of the RBA concept.
- Well-trained, highly qualified staff at all levels have been essential to Oregon's RBA efforts.
- The requirement that strategic plans and RBA measures be revisited on a regular basis has also been important in Oregon.

- Citizen involvement was highlighted as an element in the successful implementation of the RBA efforts in Oregon.
- In order to sustain its RBA efforts, Oregon has recognized the importance of continuity of support for the efforts at all levels of involvement.

VERMONT

Summary of Vermont's Results-Based Accountability Efforts

Vermont's results-based accountability (RBA) story begins in the early 1980s with collaborative efforts between the Agency of Human Services (AHS) and the Department of Education (DOE). Early programs to address the needs of children with behavioral disorders have grown into joint visioning and the establishment of formal and informal mechanisms to work together to serve the state's children and families.

The Vermont State Team for Children and Families' RBA Focus. The Vermont State Team for Children and Families, established in 1994, is responsible for creating better coordinated services for children and families in the state. It has developed a set of goals and measures that cut across all programs serving children and families in the state. It also works to develop effective strategies to support regional teams and communities serving children and families.

Success by Six. One important component of the state's child and family services accountability work is the Success by Six initiative. This initiative provides a framework to help local services organizations and providers to focus on the common goals of having children be healthy and ready to learn by the time they reach kindergarten.

Department of Education's RBA Focus. In addition to the work it does jointly with AHS, DOE has established its own organizational goals within the broad vision of "high skills for every student — no exceptions, no excuses." This framework includes indicators that form the basis of school "report cards." Since 1992, the report cards have been providing school personnel, parents, and the community with school-level results information. The report cards are intended to motivate local schools and communities to take action to improve education.

Unique Features of the Vermont Case Study

Vermont, the smallest state in HFRP's study, provides a useful example of how a small-scale effort can be very successful. The state has developed a system to enable it to make decisions about programs and report publicly on the status of the social well-being of the state and communities in the area of social services and education. Several aspects of Vermont's RBA efforts are worth noting:

- The small size of the state has enabled close contact among those involved and has facilitated data collection.
- Leadership has been essential.
- Strong foundation support has helped move the effort along.

Table 7. Political Information

	Governor (party affiliation)	State legislature: House	State legislature: Senate	Length of legislative sessions	Type of legislature[56]	Legislative term limits
Florida	Lawton Chiles (D)	R	R	60 days/year	hybrid	yes
Georgia	Zell Miller (D)	D	D	40 days/year	part-time	no
Iowa	Terry Branstad (R)	R	R	100 days/year	hybrid	no
Minnesota	Arne Carlson (R)	D	D	120 days/year	hybrid	no
North Carolina	James B. Hunt (D)	R	D	150-210 days/ even year, fewer/odd year	hybrid	no
Ohio	George V. Voinovich (R)	R	R	full year	full-time	yes
Oregon	John A. Kitzhaber (D)	R	R	as long as necessary	hybrid	yes
Vermont	Howard Dean (D)	D	D	every other year	part-time	no

[56] The three types of legislatures are defined by Karl Kurtz in *Understanding the Diversity of American State Legislatures, extension of remarks*. (June 1992). They are: full-time (large staff, relatively high pay, and stable membership), part-time (low pay, small staff, and high turnover), and hybrid (a combination of full- and part-time).

Table 8. State Demographic Information [57]

	Population (millions)	Per capita income (dollars)	Median family income (dollars)	Poverty rate: general (percent)	Poverty rate: families with children under age 18 (percent)	Unemployment rate (percent)	Unemployment rank among 50 states	Annie E. Casey KIDS COUNT Rank
Florida	14.2	22,916	32,500	16	25	4.9	25	47
Georgia	7.2	21,741	35,400	14	21	4.5	31	45
Iowa	2.8	21,012	38,200	12.2	13	3.4	45	5
Minnesota	4.6	23,971	41,900	9.2	16	3.7	42	11
North Carolina	7.2	21,103	34,100	14	21	4.0	37	42
Ohio	11.1	22,514	38,500	12	19	5.0	19	25
Oregon	3.2	21,611	21,611	11	12	5.5	11	21
Vermont	0.6	21,231	21,231	10.3	13	4.5	31	4
United States	262.9	23,196	40,611	13.8	20.8	5.3	--	--

[57] Information for this section was obtained from the following sources: Morgan, K.O., and Morgan, S. (1997). *State rankings, 1997: A statistical overview of the 50 United States*. Lawrence, KS: Morgan Quinto Press; U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Current population survey* and *state poverty rates*, online at www.census.gov; U.S. Department of Labor, *Bureau of Labor statistics*; *Statistical abstract of the United States, 1996*. Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration. (116th Edition); *KIDS COUNT data book: State profiles of child well-being*. (1997). Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. Most data are from 1995.

APPENDIX B

Methodology

This report examines the potential of results-based accountability (RBA) efforts for child and family services and some of the characteristics of promising RBA efforts. It is based on HFRP's two-year study of the RBA efforts of eight states (Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Minnesota, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, and Vermont). The experiences of each state are discussed separately in a series of case study reports entitled *Aiming for Accountability*. The case study reports discuss the key RBA efforts in each state, the impetus for and history of these efforts, the governance structures, the design and implementation of these efforts (including the identification of goals, indicators, and targets), the current or proposed use of the systems, and some of the lessons learned.

To conduct these studies, HFRP utilized qualitative data collection. Staff began the selection of the eight states chosen for our case studies by contacting key informants from national organizations who had been working in the area of RBA. These key informants nominated a number of states that were currently planning, designing, or implementing RBA systems for child and family programs. HFRP then contacted staff in these states and reviewed documents to learn more about the nature of their efforts. Additionally, HFRP contacted staff in a number of other states to learn if they were engaged in the development of RBA systems for child and family programs and, if so, the nature of their efforts. On the basis of this research, HFRP identified the efforts of 18 states, which are highlighted in our publication, *Resource Guide of Results-Based Accountability Efforts: Profiles of Selected States* (1997).

From the 18 states profiled, HFRP selected eight states to study in-depth. The eight case study states were chosen because they represent different foci as well as various stages of development. These states are implementing a variety of accountability approaches, including statewide and agency-level strategic planning, performance-based budgeting, and performance-based contracting. Each state has conceptualized and developed its system in response to its needs, as well as the technical, organizational, and political constraints within which it operates.

To obtain information on each of the eight states' RBA efforts, HFRP staff reviewed a variety of documentation and conducted extensive telephone interviews with key informants at the state and local levels. Staff then conducted week-long site visits to each state. During each site visit, staff interviewed a number of personnel from governors' offices, state and local agencies, legislatures, advocacy groups, and universities. During these interviews, interviewees were asked about the key aspects of the conceptualization, development, and implementation of RBA systems. They were also asked about challenges they faced in developing these efforts and the lessons they had learned. Where possible, HFRP staff also attended planning meetings around RBA work. For each case study, HFRP interviewed at least 30 individuals with a variety of affiliations to obtain a comprehensive and varied view of the state's RBA efforts.

Given the variety of RBA efforts in states, the multiple entities and actors involved, and the many components of these efforts, HFRP staff developed a multi-level analytic framework to examine the data. This framework enabled HFRP to code interview data by four categories: system (for example, strategic planning, performance budgeting, performance contracting);

governance level (for example, statewide, inter-agency, agency, local entity); aspect of the system (for example, history, design and implementation, uses, barriers and opportunities, sustainability); and actor (for example, governor's staff, legislators/staff, agency staff, advocacy groups). In some cases, these dimensions were further refined. This multiple coding enabled HFRP staff to compile comprehensive descriptions of efforts in each state, based on a variety of perspectives. This framework also enabled staff to examine a variety of cross-case themes (for example, the use of budgeting systems by legislatures across states and the processes agencies in different states have used to choose goals and indicators). A qualitative software package, NUD*IST, facilitated analysis of the data. These themes were examined across states to obtain information about the cross-state themes and issues that emerge in designing and implementing RBA systems.

We recognize that RBA systems are evolving and will continue to evolve in response to both implementation challenges and state and national policy changes. Therefore, we stress that the information contained in these case studies describes these states' RBA initiatives as of November 1997.

APPENDIX C

RBA Resources

Brizius, J. A. & Campbell, M. D. (1991). Getting results: A guide for government accountability. Washington, DC: Council of Governors' Policy Advisors.
This book, written primarily for those who are responsible for producing results in human services, is a guide to increasing accountability in government. It begins with an overview of performance accountability in state government and discusses the benefits and limitations of performance accountability systems. The book also includes a discussion of performance accountability and the policy process. Several chapters discuss how to develop and use a performance accountability system and how to institutionalize accountability in state government. The book provides a strong, comprehensive guide to the basic tenets of performance accountability. To obtain, contact: Council of Governors' Policy Advisors, Hall of the States, 400 North Capitol Street, Suite 390, Washington, DC 20001-1511.
Tel: (202) 624-5386. Fax: (202) 624-7846.

National Performance Review. *Managing results: Initiatives in select American cities.* (1995a, August 31). Washington, DC: Author.
This compilation of self-reported descriptions of cities' ongoing performance measurement efforts is designed to provide information about alternative techniques to those working in the field and introductory examples to those not yet involved. Increased focus on achievement of results, the National Performance Review explains, encourages governments to focus organizational efforts, facilitate efficient and effective use of resources, and counter the growing tide of taxpayer skepticism. In addition to the experiential summaries, the document contains clear responses to common concerns and questions regarding the value of performance measurement and terms typically associated with the phrase. To obtain, contact: National Performance Review, 750 17th Street, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20006. Fax: (202) 632-0390.

Osborne, D. & Gaebler, T. (1992). Reinventing government: How the entrepreneurial spirit is transforming the public sector. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
In this book that started the 'reinventing government' movement, Osborne and Gaebler discuss efforts to measure and improve outcomes in a variety of public as well as private sector settings. Intended for popular audiences, this book touches on some of the issues in the movement toward outcomes-based accountability. Al Gore's National Performance Review is based on many of the ideas put forth in this work. Available for $22.95 in major bookstores.

Schorr, L., Farrow, F., Hornbeck, D., & Watson, S. (1995). The case for shifting to results-based accountability with a start-up list of outcome measures. Washington, DC: Improved Outcomes for Children Project and the Center for the Study of Social Policy.
This paper sets out some of the issues in the shift to results-based accountability, and identifies a list of outcome measures with annotations on their use. The authors see results-based accountability as an essential part of a larger strategy to improve outcomes for children. This paper sets the stage for later discussions of how these outcomes can be translated into a program agenda; how that program agenda can then lead to a budget and financial plan; and how, over time, results-based accountability can be combined with both rewards and penalties, based on

performance. To obtain, contact: The Improved Outcomes for Children Project, c/o Center for the Study of Social Policy, 1250 Eye Street, NW, Suite 503, Washington D.C. 20005. Tel: (202) 371-1565. Fax: (202) 371-1472.

Young, N., Gardner, S., Coley, S., Schorr, L., & Bruner, C. (1994). Making a difference: Moving to outcome-based accountability for comprehensive service reforms (Resource Brief #7). Falls Church, VA: National Center for Service Integration.
This resource brief contains three chapters that address various aspects of accountability systems for child and family services programs. One chapter provides a conceptual framework for understanding and examining outcomes within the context of goals, strategies, and resources. Another chapter describes the rationale for outcomes-based accountability systems and provides a preliminary list of child outcome measures which can be used to assess progress. The final chapter describes the challenges in measuring the impact of service strategies and suggests a new approach to evaluating comprehensive, community-based service reform efforts. Much useful information is packed into a few pages. To obtain, contact: NCSI Information Clearinghouse, 5111 Leesburg Pike, Suite 702, Falls Church, VA 22041. Tel: (703) 824-7447.

Friedman, Mark. (1997). *A guide to developing and using performance measures in results-based budgeting.* Washington, DC: The Finance Project. This paper addresses the challenge of how to be accountable for the best possible performance, while ensuring that performance is aligned with overall efforts to improve results. To obtain, contact: The Finance Project, 1000 Vermont Avenue, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. Tel: (202) 628-4200.

Hauser, Robert M., Brown, Brett V., & Prosser, William R., Eds. (1997). *Indicators of children's well-being.* New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation. Essays by experts in multiple disciplines assess how data on physical development, education, economic security, family and neighborhood conditions, and social behavior are collected and analyzed; what findings they reveal; and what improvements are needed to create a more comprehensive and policy-relevant system of measurement. Available in major bookstores.

Harvard Family Research Project
38 Concord Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
Tel: (617) 495-9108
Fax: (617) 495-8594
E-Mail: HFRP@HUGSE1.HARVARD.EDU
WWW: http://hugse1.harvard.edu/~hfrp